Withdrawal of reservation for SCs and STs in the Army

9. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether Government have a proposal to withdraw reservation of posts for appointment in different grades in Army; and

(b)if so, the reasons lor taking such a decision to dereserve the posts earmarked for SCs, STs & other categories in Army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Recruitment in the Army is open to all sections of the society irrespective of caste, creed or religion provided they meet the laid down physical, medical and educational standards.

In order to maintain highest standards of operational efficiency, appointments and selection to the Defence Services have been made strictly on merit and no reservation on the basis of the caste, community, area or class is provided.

Ajit Kumar Committee Report

10. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether the Ajit Kumar Committee looking into (i) Fifth Pay Commission related anomalies, (ii) grievances of armed forces personnel with special emphasis on risk related allpwaces, and (iii) regrouping of personnel below officer rank has since submitted its Report to Union Defence Minister;

(b)if so, when and what are the details of its main recommendations; and

(c)the time likely to be taken by Government to examine/implement the Report and whether any budgetary provisions have been made during 1998-99?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Ajit Kumar Committee- to consider anomalies in pay and allowances of the armed forces personnel arising out of the V Cental Pay Commission recommendations, has submitted its Report. It will not be in public interest to disclose the recommendations of the Committee at this stage, as these are-presently under consideration of the Government.

(c) Action has been initiated for early implementation.

Test firing of Ghauri Missile by Pakistan

11. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:
SHRI S.M. KRISHNA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether Pakistan test fired Ghauri missile with a range of 1500 km. which is capable of carrying a load of 700 kg. on 6th April, 1998;

(b)whether the missile has been made with the technology transfer of M-ll group of missiles of China;

(c)whether Government have taken adequate measures to counter the threat posed to country's security by such development; and

(d)if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government is aware of reports regarding test-firing of "Ghauri" missile by Pakistan. Reports also suggest the possibility of the missile/missile technology having been obtained from a third country. The Chinese assistance to Pakistan in the supply of M-ll missile or technical assistance in the development of indigenous missile, is wellknown.